
Bogus Overprints on Great Britain Perfins

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It was common practice up to the beginning of the First World War for dealers to apply crude overprints to poor specimens of GB stamps which were sold cheaply to collectors wanting to fill spaces in their pre-printed albums with stamps that were not available in large quantities and which they could not otherwise afford. These stamps are not forgeries as they were not meant to deceive serious collectors and are better referred to as bogus overprints, produced in large quantities for the so-called "packet trade". They frequently feature perfins, which in that epoch were regarded as being worthless. Some of these overprints may look correct at first glance, but the "wrong" cancel is the first indicator that the overprint needs a closer inspection as it is probably bogus.

A typical example of such a bogus overprint is the British Bechuanaland stamp described in Bob Szymanski's article in the September/October *Bulletin* (63:107). In this case each line of the overprint is too short, the spacing between the two lines of the overprint is too short and the bottom line is not horizontal. The blurred cancel is not identifiable and possibly of fiscal origin.



Bogus



Genuine

A similar example of a bogus British Bechuanaland overprint on a GB perfin is illustrated below. [Editor's note: This is stamp submitted by Dave Smith described on page 139.] In this case the two



Bogus



Genuine

lines of the overprint are a bit too far apart and are not strongly defined and some of the characters are not correct, particularly "BECH". Also, there were no oval registered cancels used in Bechuanaland during the British period. Furthermore the overprints are not horizontal, and across a pane or sheet any small deviation from horizontal can lead to major varieties.

As a additional comment on Bob Szymanski's previously referenced article, mail from the West African colonies went on the Liverpool Packet and any uncanceled stamps would get a Liverpool cancel on arrival. This is illustrated by the postal stationery card from the Oil Rivers shown below. The card has a Bonny River dispatch mark dated 19 October 1893 and the stamp cancelled with the barred oval 466 of Liverpool with Liverpool Packet receiving mark dated 21 November alongside. I believe I have seen similar Zululand items with the Liverpool Packet mark.



**Oil Rivers card
with Liverpool cancel**

[Editor's note: As stated on their web site (www.gbos.org.uk), the GB Overprints Society (GBOS) helps members and collectors to explore the many ways and reasons why British stamps and other postal material have been overprinted, whether it is for use outside the UK or for special functions within the UK. This opens up a wide variety of avenues, which will interest not only GB collectors who want to find out other uses of their favorite stamps, but also collectors of particular countries or themes. The web site is quite informative if you are interested in overprints and this area of philately.]